

## Commissioner's Weekly Wrap Up

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DCS Communications Office

**April 23, 2004**

### **This Week In Central Office**

#### Monday, April 19

Commissioner Miller was the featured speaker at the Annual Banquet of Administrative Assistants in Murray, Kentucky.

#### Tuesday, April 20

Commissioner Miller gave the keynote address at the annual Crime Victims' Rights Week ceremony in the children's memorial garden located in Nashville's Centennial Park.

### **The Week Ahead**

#### Tuesday, April 27

Commissioner Miller will attend the first meeting of the Governor's new Task Force for Meth Abuse at 1:00 p.m. in Nashville.

At 3:30 p.m., Commissioner Miller will tour [Renewal House](#) in Nashville.

#### Thursday, April 29

Commissioner Miller will give brief remarks at the Children's Justice Task Force Meeting in Nashville.

#### Friday, April 30

Commissioner Miller will visit the Shelby County Region!

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## **Governor's Task Force on Methamphetamine Abuse**

Congratulations to the Upper Cumberland region's **Betsy Dunn** for being selected as the DCS designee to Governor Bredesen's Meth Task Force!

Dunn is a child protective services case manager III in Putnam County with over 15 years of field experience. Originally from Warren County, Dunn has been serving on the front lines in Putnam County since 1990.

The Task Force's first meeting is scheduled for April 27 at the State Capitol in Nashville. Subsequent meetings will be held in communities across the state.

The Task Force, established by executive order on April 7, is charged with developing a comprehensive strategy for addressing the manufacture, trafficking and abuse of methamphetamine in Tennessee. Task Force recommendations are due to the Governor no later than September 1.

Please join us in congratulating Betsy, as are confident she will represent our department well!



### **Andrea Walks for Tennessee's Children: A promise in action!** *How do I get involved?*

**Sign up to walk:** A registration form for the walk will soon be available both via mail and [www.andreawalks.com](http://www.andreawalks.com). Whether you're ready to walk one mile or 20, this event is geared to you. Transportation will be arranged back to the starting point for walkers who only want to go one mile.

Walkers are encouraged to secure sponsors who will finance their walk, either per mile or by a lump sum donation. An individual sponsorship form will be included in the information packet for registered walkers. The first event will be in September.

Andrea will walk more than 600 total miles to help these very deserving not-for-profit groups, with average daily mileage of 10-20 miles each day.

**Help with your area walk:** Each local Advocacy Center is coordinating volunteers in its area. To find the walk and the center closest to you, [click here](#).



## May is National Foster Care Month

Please begin brainstorming of ways to engage your city officials, legislators, community partners and local media in this exciting month of recruitment and celebration!

In addition, please [email us](#) your region's foster care month activities to post on the Internet. Please be sure to include ALL importation details such as time, date, location and purpose.

**And mark your calendars for Wednesday, May 5, at 1:00 p.m.**, the Governor's Office, DCS, TN Commission on Children & Youth, and the TN Foster Parents' Association will join together in celebration of Tennessee's foster parents! The event will take place on the front steps of the State Capitol Building in Nashville.

## Media Spotlight



April's media spotlight is shining brightly on the **Hamilton County Region!**

From letters to the editor, public service announcement taping & soliciting TV appearances – the efforts of this region prove that proactive relationship building with local media can go a long way to provide much needed positive press for our department.

Thank you Jackie Jolley and staff for a public relations job well done!

## Communications Update

Thank you for emailing us your favorite motivational and leadership quotes! Please continue sending them to [Sarah Beth Davis](#)!



Looking for statewide Child Abuse Prevention Month events? Check out the DCS web [homepage](#)!

## *From the Desk of Viola Miller: Foster Parents – Our Greatest Assets*

Our number one assets for children in our area are foster parents. We must chose them wisely, train them carefully, and support them constantly. Retention of our current high quality foster parents is even more important than recruiting new families.

Foster parents can be our "best friends or our worst enemies"; it really all depends on us. Support comes down to a few key principles:

**1. Always return their phone calls.**

The rule should be immediately and never longer than 48 hours. You are out of your offices frequently so you need a plan to ensure that calls are returned.

**2. Always include foster parents** in Child and Family Team Meetings, staffings, and court dates. Always give them at least three days notice.

**3. Always hold a quality visit with every foster family** that has a child at absolute minimum of once a month. A quality visit means sitting down in their home and actively listening to what they have to tell you.

**4. Every foster family must have a copy of each foster child's permanency plan.**

Following these few rules will vastly improve our relationship with foster parents. We are also well served by

practicing the four basic principles of professional behavior:

1. Preserve the integrity of others.
2. Practice active listening.
3. Involve others in problem solving.
4. Accept responsibility for your own behavior.

We currently have over 6,000 DCS and provider foster families and we use less than half of these. Ask yourself "why?" Let's close those that we will not use and nurture those that serve us well.

We currently have about 65% of our adoptions occurring in foster homes. If we "follow the rules" and select, train, and support our families, that percentage will go up to 85%. Think how much more quickly our children can move to permanency.

Our children deserve our very best efforts. Safety isn't enough. Every child deserves a home with loving adults. Our foster homes are our best asset for insuring a home for children in both facilitating reunification and moving children to adoptions.

Be careful out there. You have a huge and vitally important job to do.

*Do you have other ideas for nurturing our foster parents? Please send these ideas to [Margie Maddux](#) and we will publish them in the Weekly Wrap-up!*

***Next week's essay: A Child's World View***



The successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at them.

~Author Unknown

You can't stop the waves, but you can **learn** to surf.

~Author Unknown

The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.

~William James, Psychologist

A bend in the road is not the end of the road unless you fail to make the turn.

~Author Unknown

You are not here merely to make a living: You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision and with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. **You are here to enrich the world**, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.

~President Woodrow T. Wilson

No man stands so tall as when he stoops to help a child.

~Shriners of North America

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